



## Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition

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**For Immediate Release**

### **National Public Health Week 2018**

[**Jackson, MI**] During the first full week of April each year, the American Public Health Association brings together communities across the United States to observe National Public Health Week. In 2018, this event will be held April 2 – 8. The week is a time to recognize the contributions of public health, and highlight issues that are important to improving the public's health.

In 2018, National Public Health Week kicks off by highlighting behavioral health, and focusing on advocating for improved access to mental and behavioral health services. People experiencing mental and behavioral health issues smoke cigarettes at a much higher rate than the general population, but are less likely to quit than the general population. Approximately 25% of adults in the U.S. have some form of mental illness or substance use disorder, and these adults consume almost 40% of all cigarettes smoked by adults. People with mental illness or substance use disorders die approximately 5 years earlier than those without these disorders, and many of these deaths are caused by smoking cigarettes.

The Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition is proud to recognize the efforts of Lifeways Community Mental Health for the implementation of their new tobacco free campus policy which will go into effect on April 1, 2018. This policy will make their campus a tobacco free zone. In addition, staff are being offered resources to assist them in making the transition easier in the form of 7 minute kits or goodie bags containing mints, gum toothpicks, etc. (representing the average amount of time it takes to smoke a cigarette), resource materials with coping strategies and quit information if interested, CO Testing to determine level of carbon monoxide in their lungs, support by fellow co-workers and a strong policy development team made up of both smokers and non-smokers representing all sectors of the work environment to ensure equity for all was maintained throughout the process.

Although people with mental illness are less likely to stop smoking than those without mental illness, many smokers with mental illness want to quit. There are evidence-based methods for helping tobacco users, including those with mental illness or substance use disorders, quit. Lifeways clients and visitors may attend FREE classes conducted by Chad Lige titled "Tobacco and You: Learn How to Quit Smoking" which are held on Thursdays from 2:00 – 3:00 at the Lifeways Community Health building. For more information call (517) 7680-3380 or send an email to [Chad.Lige@lifewaysscmh.org](mailto:Chad.Lige@lifewaysscmh.org)

Maribeth Leonard, CEO of Lifeways states the following, "*Lifeways is committed to ensuring that we support efforts to improve our employees' overall health. As an agency,*

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*we have done a lot of work to improve the health of those we serve. The next step is to extend this to our employees.”*

In addition, for individuals interested in quitting smoking, there are other resources available to help. The Michigan Tobacco Quitline is an evidence-based service that continues to provide free telephone coaching for the uninsured, pregnant women, residents enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, veterans, cancer patients, and American Indians, and free nicotine replacement therapy to those who qualify. The Quitline provides services including materials, text messaging, an online program, and referral to all Michigan residents. Tobacco users can call the Quitline at 1-800-784-8669. For information about other resources, please call Rhonda Rudolph, Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition Coordinator at (517) 768-2131.

Michigan spends \$4.59 billion annually on health care costs directly caused by smoking, including \$1.36 billion in state Medicaid costs. The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$295 million to market their products in Michigan each year, including targeted marketing aimed at individuals experiencing mental illness. In contrast, Michigan spends only \$1.63 million on tobacco prevention and control programming. *“Increased and sustained funding for evidence-based tobacco prevention and control programming is necessary to reduce tobacco use, protect young people from a lifetime of addiction to nicotine, and ensure that current tobacco users, including those with mental illness or substance use disorders, have access to resources to help them quit using tobacco,”* stated “Richard Thoune, Health Officer, Jackson County Health Department.

*“National Public Health Week is a reminder that everyone deserves the opportunity to safely live, work, learn and play. Preventing tobacco use and helping current tobacco users quit is an important part of making that happen,”* noted Ms. Rudolph, JTRC Coordinator.

For more information about National Public Health Week visit <http://www.nphw.org/> . For help with quitting tobacco call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. For additional information, please contact the Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition at (517) 768-2131.

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